

**REMARK**

At the outset, the Examiner is thanked for the thorough review and consideration of the pending application. The Office Action dated December 20, 2007 has been received and its contents carefully reviewed.

Claims 15-17, 24-27 and 30 are hereby amended; claims 1-10, 12-13 and 29 are currently cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer; and claims 14 and 28 are withdrawn from consideration. Thus, claims 15-27 and 30 remain pending in this application. Reexamination and reconsideration of the claims is respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, claims 1-10, 12-13, 15-27 and 29-30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. Claims 1-10 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by WO 02/40165 (see U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2004/0020942) to Ingenhoven et al. (hereinafter “Ingenhoven”). Claim 29 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ingenhoven in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,540,104 to Yanagita et al. (hereinafter “Yanagita”).

The rejection of claims 1-10, 12-13, 15-27 and 29-30 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, is respectfully traversed and reconsideration is requested. Since Applicants have cancelled claims 1-10, 12-13 and 29 and have amended claims 15-17, 24-27 and 30, Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection is traversed.

The rejection of claims 1-10 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being anticipated by Ingenhoven is respectfully traversed and reconsideration is requested. Since the rejected claims 1-10 and 12 are cancelled, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-10 and 12.

The rejection of claim 29 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ingenhoven in view of Yanagita is respectfully traversed and reconsideration is requested. Since the rejected claim 29 is cancelled, Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejection of claim 29.

Applicants believe the foregoing amendments place the application in condition for allowance and early, favorable action is respectfully solicited.

If for any reason the Examiner finds the application other than in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to call the undersigned attorney at (202) 496-7500 to discuss the steps necessary for placing the application in condition for allowance. All correspondence should continue to be sent to the below-listed address.

If these papers are not considered timely filed by the Patent and Trademark Office, then a petition is hereby made under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136, and any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.136 for any necessary extension of time, or any other fees required to complete the filing of this response, may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-0911. Please credit any overpayment to deposit Account No. 50-0911.

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Respectfully submitted,

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